

Sanctuary One at Double Oak Farm

by Westi Haughey

On a rainy October morning in 2011, I found myself driving under the archway of Sanctuary One at Double Oak Farm. An advertisement for this nonprofit care farm in the Applegate Valley had piqued my interest months earlier as I explored local opportunities for my family. Not only did I know my kids would love any chance to get their boots muddy and visit farm animals, but I wanted to know exactly what a care farm was.

Driving in, we could see beautiful pastures flanking either side of the driveway with pigs, horses, goats, sheep, llamas, mules, ducks and geese, all serenely integrated together. Despite the ever-larger rain drops falling overhead, Sansa Collins, the animal care manager at Sanctuary One, greeted us with a big smile (rain and mud are just business-as-usual at the farm) and explained that a care farm was not just a place to nurture animals, but also to heal people and the planet.

As we met the enormous, and surprisingly intelligent pigs, and petted a beautiful white Charolais cow, Sansa explained how the rescued animals are healed in these idyllic accommodations as the people who work with them gain



vegetable beds full of sheet mulching awaiting Spring's plantings. The new, experimental garden would be filled with tomatoes, pumpkins, corn, green beans and other earthly delights. But for now each wet bed was silently working its Winter magic, turning into rich soil.

While I was interested in learning more about the garden, my kids were eager to greet the dogs who had been watching us from their large yard, tails wagging wildly. The dog and cat cottages—no dreary kennels here—house sweet four-legged friends, some senior, others with special needs, but all loving and eager to find forever homes.

However, not all animals will ever be ready for adoption, and others may have special needs that make adoption unlikely. The Sanctuary does not euthanize those animals; instead they are lovingly cared for and live out their years in this peaceful oasis. Indeed, that looked like it could be the case for Meshach, a cat who had allegedly been set on fire and suffered severe burns, or Boo, the cat missing a foot who we met next in the cat cottage. Despite some heart wrenching stories, Boo, Meshach, and the other felines

were extremely affectionate and right at home in this kitty haven. The cottage offers high perches, tree trunks to climb, sunny windowsills to bask in, and chairs to curl up on—a cat's fantasyland missing only a warm basket of clean laundry.

Back home, while we were taking off our coats and reflecting on the things we had learned at the farm that day, I knew I would return to the Sanctuary. One year later I can be found volunteering at the Sanctuary every month. New additions have come since my first visit, including an adobe-like straw bale chicken coop, rock labyrinth, and luscious flower garden, to name a few. Meshach, Boo and countless others have found their forever companions. I have watched schoolchildren's eyes light up on tours, built "jungle-gyms" for the chickens and learned natural horsemanship techniques. Sanctuary One has brought so much to my life, and I know it can provide for yours as well.

For more information about volunteering at Sanctuary One, please visit www.SanctuaryOne.org or call 541-899-8627.



therapeutic relief. Working with animals and gardening have been shown to lower blood pressure, ease depression and reduce stress. As we crouched in the 100-year-old barn petting sweet barn cats lazing on hay bales, Sansa described the wide variety of people who share in the Sanctuary's operations, including veterans, at-risk youth, interns, volunteers and service-learning groups. Clearly "care" was not a one-way road, but the full circle existence of this farm.

Healing the earth is another critical component of this care farm's mission. Heading up the hill under the wise old oak trees for which the 55-acre Double Oak Farm is named, we discovered

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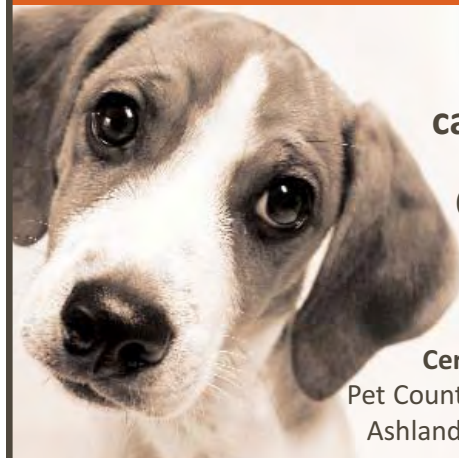
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